

XXIV.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed “to the Editors of ‘The Ibis’” :—

SIRS,—In the January number of this year’s ‘Ibis,’ p. 7, Mr. W. Jesse mentions incidentally his having seen, among other birds on the Ganges near Fatehgarh, early in April last, a flock of more than 40 Swans. I thought there must be some mistake, and on mentioning the matter to one of the Editors, a careful inspection of the MS. was made; when, as I am informed, it appeared by the use of a magnifier that the word was “Sarus” (*Grus antigone*), but without any qualifying word “Crane.”

On p. 9 Mr. Jesse says, “I have seen the 4th vol. of the ‘Birds of India and Burma,’ and notice that no native name is given to the Terns.” I am not acquainted with any work bearing the title quoted; but if, as is probable, Mr. Jesse is referring to the 4th vol. of “Birds” in the ‘Fauna of British India,’ he must have overlooked the list of Indian Tern names on p. 306. The first name there mentioned, “Tehari,” is sufficiently like “Titri,” which, Mr. Jesse says, is used for Terns by the boatmen of Oudh and the N.W. Provinces, to make it not unlikely that the one is a local form of the other. The word is printed “Tehari” in Jerdon’s ‘Birds,’ “Tihári” in Blyth’s Catalogue, p. 290; one of these might be a misprint, but it is improbable that both are. “Pancheera,” the term quoted for the Skimmer (*Rhynchops*) by Mr. Jesse, will be found in the ‘Birds,’ vol. iv. p. 327, and has been noticed by many writers, including Blyth and Jerdon, and also Reid in his “Birds of the Lucknow Division” (‘Stray Feathers,’ x. p. 86); the last-named writer, unfortunately, does not give any native name for ordinary Terns.

Yours &c.,

W. T. BLANFORD.

SIRS,—On one of the first days of January of the year 1898 a specimen of the Little Bunting (*Emberiza pusilla*) was taken by a bird-catcher in the neighbourhood of the Hague

and sold to the Zoological Gardens there. Through the kindness of the directors of that institution the specimen, which is still in excellent health and condition, came into my possession two weeks ago, and is now living in one of my aviaries.

The bird being in winter plumage, I am not quite sure about the sex, but I suppose it is a male. This is the sixth recorded occurrence of the Little Bunting in the Netherlands.

Yours &c.,

F. E. BLAAUW.

Gooilust, 's Graveland,
February 3rd, 1899.

SIRS,—At the suggestion of Dr. Blanford, made to me some time back, I have examined the type of *Euplocamus andersoni* of Elliot, contained in this museum, and have compared it with the plate in Elliot's 'Pheasants.' This specimen is, I find, accurately delineated in the plate; but it is to be observed that in both original and portrait the white rump-fringes, though visible, are not so conspicuous as to strongly affect the coloration of that part of the plumage. Mr. Elliot's second description, therefore, so far from being more accurate than the first, as Mr. Oates, in his admirable little work on the Game-Birds of India, reasonably supposes, is in this respect somewhat misleading.

Yours &c.,

FRANK FINN.

Indian Museum, Calcutta,
February 11th, 1899.

The Paradise-birds in the Dresden Museum.—In our account of the great demonstration of Paradise-birds held at Dresden on the occasion of the Meeting of the German Ornithological Society at that city in May 1897, as given in our last number (above, page 138), we regret that (on line 23) the words "Leyden Museum" were inadvertently given instead of "Dresden Museum." The latter, as Dr. Meyer showed upon that occasion (*cf.* *Abhandlungen zool. Mus. zu Dresden*, vol. vii. no. 2, p. 39), contains a remarkably

fine series of Paradise-birds, consisting at that date of 368 specimens, to which no doubt many additions have been since made.

XXV.—*Obituary.*

THE REV. ALFRED CHARLES SMITH, M.A., who died on the 7th of December last, was one of the fourteen recipients of the honour of Membership of the British Ornithologists' Union in 1864-65, when the number was raised from twenty to thirty-four Ordinary Members. At that time he was Rector of Yatesbury, Wilts. His first important contribution to 'The Ibis' seems to have been "A Sketch of the Birds of Portugal" (1868, pp. 428-460), the first compendious account of the avifauna of the western portion of the Peninsula, a region which differs widely from Spain in its natural features. The list was reprinted, with additions by Prof. Barboza du Bocage, in Mr. Smith's 'Narrative of a Spring Tour in Portugal,' a very pleasantly-written book; as were, indeed, all Mr. Smith's blends of travel, archæology, and natural history. This agreeable mixture was especially noticeable in his principal work, 'The Birds of Wiltshire,' published in 1887, and noticed in our volume for 1888 (p. 370). His writings were not always severely scientific, but they were very readable, and all who knew Mr. Smith will regret the disappearance of one of the good old school of genial naturalists.